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EDUCATIONAL NOTES AND NEWS

MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM FITZHUGH have given $12,000 to the medical school of Stanford University for the purchase of one gram of radium, for use in the actinography department of the University Hospital. The net income is to be used for clinic beds for indigent patients, particularly for those who need either X-ray or radium treatment.

THEODORE HOOVER, consulting engineer, has been appointed professor of mining and metallurgy in Stanford University.

PROFESSOR W. LEE LEWIS, of Northwestern University, has been elected chairman of the department of chemistry to succeed Professor A. Van Eps Young, who has recently retired. Captain Lewis was in charge of Organic Research Unit No. 3 of the Offense Research Section, C. W. S. during 1918 and is at present assisting Colonel W. D. Bancroft in editing the researches of the American University Experiment Station.

DR. GEORGE W. WILSON, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, has been appointed head of the department of pathology, bacteriology and preventive medicine in the Loyola University School of Medicine, Chicago.

JULIAN G. LEACH, of the University of Minnesota, has been appointed assistant professor of botany in the Colorado Agricultural College.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

APROPOS OF THE PROPOSED HISTORICAL SCIENCE SECTION

IN the April 4 number of SCIENCE, page 331, Felix Neumann referred to a proposed "Historical Science" Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. If the feasibility of forming such a section is to be seriously considered during the meeting at St. Louis it would be of interest to know how the various sciences would probably be affected by this section. As regards mathematics, in particular, it is very difficult to say what is historical mathematics and what is non-historical mathematics.

As early as 1640 the famous French mathematician and philosopher R. Descartes wrote as follows:

> I am accustomed to distinguish two things in the mathematics, the history and the science. By history I mean what is already discovered, and is committed to books. And by the science, the skill of resolving all questions.

Since the days of Descartes the amount of mathematics committed to books has increased a hundredfold and hence the history of mathematics up to the present time has outgrown the powers of a single man.

Successful mathematical investigators must perforce be mathematical historians as regards their fields of investigation. If these fields are extensive the successful investigators therein require an extensive historical knowledge. Such men are, however, not commonly known as mathematical historians but as mathematical investigators. The former term is usually reserved for those whose historical studies include details relating to the older developments, which usually have little contact with modern advances.

The historical mathematics which is of greatest interest to the investigator engaged in advancing mathematics is usually based on considerable technical knowledge and hence it would scarcely be treated in a section composed largely of non-mathematicians. On the other hand, the historical mathematics which is now commonly known as mathematical history has extensive contact with the history of other sciences and might profitably be treated in such a section. The fact that the proposed name "Historical Science" would be too comprehensive as regards mathematics can scarcely be regarded as a serious objection since the questions which would normally come before such a section would naturally be determined by its membership.

In a broad way it might perhaps be said that the mathematical history suitable for such a general section might include practically all the useful developments in this subject before the beginning of the eighteenth